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Book Notes

by DICK LOCHTE

Pomona-born Kem Nunn makes his debut as novelist with "Tapping the Source" (Delacorte, $14.95), a thriller that uses his present home town of Huntington Beach as its locale. The question is: Once the gritty suspense novel arrives later this month, how much longer can Nunn hang on in Huntington? "Tapping," which traffics heavily in cocaine-crazed surfers, demented bikers, purveyors of teen porn, snuff-film makers and blood cultists, is not exactly the stuff that brings smiles to Chamber of Commerce faces. The Beach emerges, in fact, as a spawning ground of evil so potent that it drives a basically decent young visitor to the brink of self-destruction. Nunn has done so convincing a job of telling his story that producer Martin Bregman and Universal are planning on bringing it to the screen. With filming to be done where, exactly?

★

WORDS AND WORDS—At the start of the 70s, Harris Dienstfrey asked Richard Meltzer to write about his life for the house of Outerbridge and Dienstfrey. In a flash of youthful zeal, Meltzer completed and delivered "Caned Out: The Authorized Autobiography" in seven installments, first-draft fresh from a new Selectric. Dienstfrey liked the results and the author was sure that he "was on the road to being a bookwritin' fool." But Dienstfrey left the company and Outerbridge bounced the project. In the search for another publisher, the original manuscript became lost. The only copy of the uncorrected galleys was misplaced by Penthouse magazine. The accompanying artwork—one-of-a-kind photos, postcards, certificates, etc.—disappeared at Fusion Books. But recently, a photocopy of the galleys surfaced and, better a decade-plus late than never, Illuminati is bringing out the seven volumes in softcover. The first, "Post-Natal Trash" ($3.95), is now available (at Pettler and Lieberman, 7970 Melrose Ave., and other stores). Though Meltzer hasn't changed a word of the original text, he has provided framed, detailed descriptions of the missing illustrations.

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EVENTS—*Today:* 1 p.m., author Francine Rivers talks about historical romances at the Beverly Hills Library (444 N. Rexford), sponsored by the West Coast Area Authors and Romance Enthusiasts. . . . *Tuesday:* Noon to 2 p.m., Asian poets Mitsuye Yamada, Nellie Wong and Merle Woo read at UCLA North Campus Room 20. Call 825-1006. . . . *Wednesday:* 4-6 p.m., Nobel Prize-winning poet-author Czeslaw Milosz reads at CalArts' Langley Hall in Valencia. . . . 7:30-10 p.m., Barbara Kay Pollard signs her "Grandma and Grandpa Are Special People" at Children's Book and Music Center in Santa Monica (2500 Santa Monica Blvd.). . . . *Saturday:* 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Marilyn Lowery chairs a Romance Writers' workshop at UC Santa Barbara. Call (805) 961-4200. . . . 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Gregory Benford, Jack Grapes and Susan La Tempa are among the speakers at a writers' conference at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut (1100 N. Grand Ave.). Details: (714) 594-5611, ext. 574. . . . 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., adaptations of Zane Grey's "The Rainbow Trail" and "The Last of the Duanes" are part of Alex Gordon's cowboy movie seminar at USC's Von Kleinsmid Center. Call 743-7469. . . . Evelyn Goodman will teach weekly classes in TV and film writing beginning March 17 at Park La Brea Community Center and March 22 at Glendale College. Call 242-0318.

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ANTHOLOGIES AND SUCH—New Writing and Writers, No. 20 (Riverrun: $13.95) collects short works by Samuel Beckett and Nikolai Bokov and a complete novel by George Moor. . . . Fiction 83 ($8.95; Exile Press, P.O. Box 1768, Novato 94948) features the work of new writers and has a feisty introduction by co-editor Leslie Woolf Hedley. . . . The current edition of Cogito, an International Journal for Philosophy, Society and Politics, contains critical essays on George Orwell, edited by Dennis Rohatyn. . . . The fall issue of the Antioch Review honors Franz Kafka on his 100th birthday.

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FINALLY—"David Frost's Book of the World's Worst Decisions" (Prince: $3.95), by Frost and Michael Deakin, describes a number of unwise choices. Book-wise, we discover that "M*A*S*H" was turned down by 21 houses, "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" by 18, "Kon-Tiki" by 20 and "Lorna Doone" by 18. (Could they have been right about "Lorna Doone"?). The authors try to elicit a chuckle or two from John Kennedy's Bay of Pigs faux pas. But, considering Frost's past associations with Richard Nixon, it is surprising that there is not even one passing reference to that ex-President's, ah, miscalculations. An interesting decision, that.

Letters

Inspiration From Those Late-Bloomers

For me it is certainly inspiring to start 1984 off with the news that 73-year-old Harriet Doerr's first novel, "Stones for Ibarra" (Book Review, Jan. 1), has become a best seller within a month of its publication and that Putnam's will reprint ". . . And the Ladies of the Club" by Helen Hooven Santmyer (Ohio State University, 1982). Santmyer is 88 years old and has been at it since the late 1920s by way of counteracting Sinclair Lewis' "Main Street." Late-bloomers or not, these success stories should encourage those still aspiring!

SHERRY TERZIAN
Los Angeles

Overseas Air Operations

For a history of U.S. airborne operations during World War II, I would appreciate hearing from veterans of USAAF Troop Carrier Commands who served overseas.

MILTON DANK
1022 Serpentine Lane
Wyncote, Pa. 19095

Bury the Wanderer

Regarding Stefan Heym's "The Wandering Jew" reviewed by Richard Eder (Book Review, Jan. 29), to which you devoted the bulk of the front page: Exactly what is Heym's purpose in using that title at this late date except to perpetuate anti-Semitism (read anti-*Jewish*ism)?

Let's once and for all bury that term, which has probably caused more trouble than all the words in the Old and New Testaments put together. If, in actuality, "a Biblical shoemaker spurned Christ's plea to rest by his door on the way to the Cross and was condemned to wander the earth until the Second Coming," then he did so as an individual and not as "a Jew." Each of us is born with free will and always has been; we didn't have to wait for Freud or Jung or anyone else to tell us so.

DAVID R. MOSS
Los Angeles

Equalizing Book Costs

Re: "Endpapers," Jan. 22: Generally an author gets 10% or less of the book's price, the publishers 40%, distributor-retailer another 50%—book clubs and discount outlets are not as altruistic as they make themselves out to be. If libraries were to buy directly from publishers and the bookseller's discount was credited to the author, i.e., 60%, some progress would be made in the right direction. As it is, libraries and private buyers are given different rates in the case of certain publications, so the accounting should not be that difficult.

J. P. SULLIVAN
Santa Barbara

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LOS ANGELES TIMES MARCH 4, 1984

Best Sellers

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Placement on national list is noted in parentheses.

FICTION

1 **Pet Sematary** by Stephen King (Doubleday) (1)
2 **The Story of Henri Tod** by William F. Buckley Jr. (Doubleday) (6)
3 **Poland** by James A. Michener (Random House) (4)
4 **Almost Paradise** by Susan Isaacs (Harper & Row) (5)
5 **Smart Women** by Judy Blume (Putnam's) (3)
6 **Berlin Game** by Len Deighton (Knopf) (7)
7 **The Name of the Rose** by Umberto Eco (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) (8)
8 **Who Killed the Robins Family?** by Bill Adler and Thomas Chastain (Morrow) (2)
9 **The Aquitaine Progression** by Robert Ludlum (Random House)
10 **Rainsong** by Phyllis A. Whitney (Doubleday)
11 **Night Sky** by Clare Francis (Morrow)
12 **The Journeyer** by Gary Jennings (Atheneum) (9)
13 **The Auerbach Will** by Stephen Birmingham (Little, Brown)
14 **Stones for Ibarra** by Harriet Doerr (Viking)
15 **The Neverending Story** by Michael Ende, translated by Ralph Manheim (Doubleday)

The National Best-Seller List also includes **Changes** by Danielle Steel (10), **The Wicked Day** by Mary Stewart (11), **Morets: Dragonlady of Pern** by Anne McCaffrey (12), **The Robots of Dawn** by Isaac Asimov (13), **Nerve Endings** by William Martin (14) and **Unto This Hour** by Tom Wicker (15).

GENERAL

1 **Lines and Shadows** by Joseph Wambaugh (Morrow) (4)
2 **In Search of Excellence: Lessons From America's Best Run Companies** by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman (Harper & Row) (2)
3 **Motherhood: The Second Oldest Profession** by Erma Bombeck (McGraw-Hill) (1)
4 **On Wings of Eagles** by Ken Follett (Morrow) (5)
5 **Mayor: An Autobiography** by Edward I. Koch (Simon & Schuster) (3)
6 **Tough Times Never Last, but Tough People Do** by Robert Schuller (Thomas Nelson) (6)
7 **James Coco Diet Book** by James Coco and Marion Paone (Bantam) (8)
8 **The Discoverers** by Daniel J. Boorstin (Random House) (9)
9 **Coroner** by Thomas T. Noguchi with Joseph DiMona (Simon & Schuster)
10 **Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony** by Lewis Thomas (Viking)
11 **Nothing Down** by Robert G. Allen (Simon & Schuster) (7)
12 **E. B. White: A Biography** by Scott Elledge (Norton)
13 **The Best of James Herriot** by James Herriot (St. Martin's) (10)
14 **Giant Steps: The Autobiography of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar** by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Peter Knobler (Bantam)
15 **Fatal Vision** by Joe McGinniss (Putnam's)

The National Best Seller List also includes **Creating Wealth** by Robert G. Allen (11), **Weight Watchers Fast and Fabulous Cookbook** by Jean Nidetch (12), **Putting the One Minute Manager to Work** by Kenneth Blanchard and Robert Lorber (13), **Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse** by Billy Graham (14) and **Vietnam: A History** by Stanley Karnow (15).

AND THE CRITICS COMMEND

The Origins of Anti-Semitism, John G. Gager (Oxford). Presents theory that the evolution of prejudice against Jews stems from theological disputes in Judaism itself 2,000 years ago.

Passing Through Havana, Felicia Rosshandle (St. Martin's). Novel/memoir about the daughter of a wealthy Jewish family that escapes the Holocaust.

Russian Women: Two Stories, I. Grekova (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). Modern ways of women: one finds identity connections at mid-life; another's life is dwarfed by civil war.

The Writer and Human Rights, Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights (Anchor/Doubleday). Collection of speeches from a 1981 symposium protesting political repression.

One Writer's Beginnings, Eudora Welty (Harvard Univ. Press). From the autobiographical Harvard Massey Lecture series.

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